



Characteristics of Recent Migrants, Australia methodology

Reference period November 2019

Released 12/06/2020

On this page

[Explanatory notes](#)

[Technical note - data quality](#)

[Glossary](#)

[Quality declaration - summary](#)

[Abbreviations](#)

Explanatory notes

Overview

This publication contains results from the 2019 Characteristics of Recent Migrants Survey (CoRMS), conducted throughout Australia in November 2019 as a supplement to the monthly Labour Force Survey (LFS).

CoRMS provides data about the labour force status and other characteristics of recent migrants and temporary residents, including:

- general demographic and employment characteristics of recent migrants and temporary residents,
- the type of visa held by recent migrants and temporary residents on arrival in Australia,
- education and employment before and after arriving in Australia,
- any difficulties experienced finding work since migration and
- proficiency in English.

The publication [Labour Force, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0) (cat. no. 6202.0) contains information about survey design, sample redesign, scope, coverage and population benchmarks relevant to the monthly LFS, which also apply to supplementary surveys. It also contains definitions of demographic and labour force characteristics.

Concepts, sources and methods

The conceptual framework used in Australia's LFS aligns closely with the standards and guidelines set out in Resolutions of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians. Descriptions of the underlying concepts and structure of Australia's labour force statistics, and the sources and methods used in compiling these estimates, are presented in [Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods, Feb 2018 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6102.0.55.001\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6102.0.55.001) (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001).

In July 2014, the LFS survey questionnaire underwent a number of developments. For further information see [Information Paper: Questionnaire Used in the Labour Force Survey, July 2014 \(https://abs.gov.au/research/labour/questionnaires-used-labour-force-survey\)](https://abs.gov.au/research/labour/questionnaires-used-labour-force-survey).

Scope

The scope of CoRMS is restricted to people aged 15 years and over who were usual residents of private dwellings, excluding:

- members of the permanent defence forces
- certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments, customarily excluded from the Census of Population and Housing and estimated resident populations
- overseas residents in Australia
- members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants)
- people living in Indigenous communities in Australia
- people living in non-private dwellings such as hotels, university residences, boarding schools, hospitals, retirement homes, homes for people with disabilities, and prisons.

To be eligible to receive the CoRMS, people had to:

- be born overseas (excluding New Zealand)
- not be Australian or New Zealand citizens before arrival
- have arrived in Australia after 2009
- if arrived in 2019, plan to stay longer than 12 months
- be aged 15 years or over on arrival.

Coverage

In the LFS, coverage rules are applied which aim to ensure that each person is associated with only one dwelling and has only one chance of selection in the survey. See [Labour Force, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0) (cat. no. 6202.0) for more details.

Data from the CoRMS is available by State, Greater Capital City Statistical Area, Section of State, Remoteness area and Statistical Area Level 4, subject to confidentiality constraints. Geography has been classified according to the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS), July 2016. For a list of these publications see the [ABS Geography Publications \(https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/ABS+Geography+Publications\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/ABS+Geography+Publications) page.

How the data is collected

Approximately 92% of the selected households were fully responding to the Monthly Population survey. Of these, 2,887 complete interviews were obtained from recent migrants and temporary residents.

Information was mainly collected through interviews conducted over a two-week period in November 2019. Interviews were conducted face-to-face or over the telephone, using computer assisted interviewing, while some respondents were able to provide certain information over the Internet via a self-completed form.

In CoRMS, 'any responsible adult' respondent methodology is predominantly used. This involves one adult in the household providing answers to the questionnaires for people in the household who are in-scope of CoRMS, and are related. Where the 'any responsible adult' is not related to the migrant, a personal interview with the migrant is conducted. This is also known as self-reporting.

How the data is processed

Weighting

Weighting is the process of adjusting results from a sample survey to infer results for the total population. To do this, a 'weight' is allocated to each enumerated person. The weight is a value which indicates how many people in the population are represented by the sample person.

The first step in calculating weights for each unit is to assign an initial weight, which is the inverse of the probability of the unit being selected in the survey. For example, if the probability of a person being selected in the survey was 1 in 300, then the person would have an initial weight of 300 (that is, they represent 300 people).

Population benchmarks

The initial weights are then calibrated to align with independent estimates of the population, referred to as benchmarks. The population included in the benchmarks is the survey scope. This calibration process ensures that the weighted data conform to the independently estimated distribution of the population described by the benchmarks rather than to the distribution within the sample itself. Calibration to population benchmarks helps to compensate for over or under-enumeration of particular categories of persons which may occur due to either the random nature of sampling or non-response.

The survey was benchmarked to the estimated resident population (ERP) aged 15 years and over living in private dwellings and non-institutionalised special dwellings in each state and territory. People living in Indigenous communities were excluded.

In 2016 the weighting methodology was modified to include ERP Migration statistics from [Migration, Australia \(https://abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/migration-australia/latest-release\)](https://abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/migration-australia/latest-release) (cat. no. 3412.0) as part of the benchmark process. This weighting method was repeated in 2019.

Estimation

Survey estimates of counts of persons are obtained by summing the weights of persons with the characteristics of interest.

To minimise the risk of identifying individuals in aggregate statistics, a technique is used to randomly adjust cell values. This technique is called perturbation. Perturbation involves small random adjustment of the statistics and is considered the most satisfactory technique for avoiding the release of identifiable statistics while maximising the range of information that can be released. These adjustments have a negligible impact on the underlying pattern of the statistics. After perturbation, a given published cell value will be consistent across all tables. However, adding up cell values to derive a total will not necessarily give the same result as published totals. The introduction of perturbation in publications ensures that these statistics are consistent with statistics released via services such as TableBuilder.

Reliability of estimates

All sample surveys are subject to error which can be broadly categorised as either: sampling error or non-sampling error. Relative standard error (RSE) for estimates and margin of error (MOE) for proportions are available in the data tables. Estimates with high RSEs are annotated and caution is advised when using these values. For more information refer to the Technical Note.

Data comparability

Comparability of time series

The ABS has previously conducted a survey of recent migrants in 1984, 1987, 1990, 1993, 1996, 1999, 2004, 2007, 2010, 2013 and 2016. While the ABS seeks to maximise consistency and comparability over time by minimising changes to the survey, sound survey practice requires ongoing development to maintain the integrity of the data. When comparing data over time the following changes need to be considered:

- Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Migrants Surveys conducted up to and including November 1996 were restricted to migrants who arrived in Australia after 1970, were aged 18 years and over on arrival, and had obtained permanent Australian resident status.
- For November 1999, the survey was restricted to migrants who arrived in Australia after 1980, were aged 18 years and over on arrival, and had obtained permanent Australian resident status.
- For November 2004, the survey included migrants aged 15 years and over on arrival, who arrived in Australia after 1984 who had obtained permanent Australian resident status, as well as people who were temporary residents of Australia for 12 months or more.
- For November 2007, November 2010 and November 2013, the surveys have included migrants who arrived in Australia in the last 10 years (since 1997, 2000 and 2003 respectively), were aged 15 years and over on arrival, who had obtained permanent Australian resident status, as well as people who were temporary residents of Australia for 12 months or more. In 2007, people born in New Zealand, those holding New Zealand citizenship and those who held Australian citizenship before their arrival in Australia were excluded.
- In 2010 and 2013, people holding New Zealand citizenship and those who held Australian citizenship before their arrival in Australia were excluded, while other people born in New Zealand were included.
- In 2016, New Zealand born people were excluded from the survey.
- In 2016 the weighting methodology was modified to include ERP Migration statistics as part of the benchmark process.

Revisions are made to population benchmarks for the LFS after each five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. The latest revision based on the 2016 Census of Population and Housing has been in use since November 2018. See [Labour Force, Australia](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0>) (cat. no. 6202.0) for more information.

As announced in the June 2012 issue of [Australian Demographic Statistics](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3101.0) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3101.0>) (cat. no. 3101.0), intercensal error between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses was larger than normal due to improved methodologies used in the 2011 Census Post Enumeration Survey. The intercensal error

analysis indicated that previous population estimates for the base Census years were over-counted. An indicative estimate of the size of the over-count is that there should have been 240,000 fewer people at June 2006, 130,000 fewer in 2001 and 70,000 fewer in 1996. As a result, Estimated Resident Population estimates have been revised for the last 20 years rather than the usual five. Consequently, estimates of particular populations derived since CoRMS 2013 may be lower than those published for previous years as the CoRMS estimates have not been revised. Therefore, caution should be used when comparing CoRMS 2016 and CoRMS 2019 estimates with previous years.

Comparability with other ABS surveys

Estimates from the CoRMS may differ from the estimates produced from other ABS collections, for several reasons. The CoRMS is a sample survey and its results are subject to sampling error. Results may differ from other sample surveys, which are also subject to sampling error. Users should take account of the relative standard errors (RSEs) on estimates and those of other survey estimates where comparisons are made.

Differences may also exist in the scope and/or coverage of the CoRMS compared to other surveys. Differences in estimates, when compared to the estimates of other surveys, may result from different reference periods reflecting seasonal variations, non-seasonal events that may have impacted on one period but not another, or because of underlying trends in the phenomena being measured.

Finally, differences can occur as a result of using different collection methodologies. This is often evident in comparisons of similar data items reported from different ABS collections where, after taking account of definition and scope differences and sampling error, residual differences remain. These differences are often the result of the mode of the collections, such as whether data are collected by an interviewer or self-enumerated by the respondent and whether the data are collected from the person themselves or from a proxy respondent. Differences may also result from the context in which questions are asked, i.e. where in the interview the questions are asked and the nature of preceding questions. The impacts on data of different collection methodologies are difficult to quantify. As a result, every effort is made to minimise such differences.

Labour force survey

Since the CoRMS is conducted as a supplement to the LFS, data items collected in the LFS are also available in CoRMS. However, there are some important differences between the two surveys. The CoRMS sample is a subset of the LFS sample (see the Introduction of these Explanatory Notes) and has a response rate which is slightly lower than the LFS response rate for the same period. Also, the scope of the CoRMS differs slightly to the scope of the

LFS (refer to the Scope section above). Due to these differences between the samples, the CoRMS data are weighted as a separate process to the weighting of LFS data.

Differences may therefore be found in the estimates collected in the LFS and published as part of the CoRMS, when compared with estimates published in the November 2019 issue of Labour Force, Australia (cat. no. 6202.0). It is also impracticable to obtain information relating to the labour force status of people before migration according to the strict definitions used in the monthly LFS. It is for this reason that 'Has had a job since arriving in Australia' and 'Has not had a job since arriving in Australia' are used to describe previous labour force status, while 'employed', 'unemployed' and 'not in the labour force' are used to describe labour force status as at November 2019.

Migrant integrated datasets

Estimates from CoRMS will differ from estimates from the [Microdata: Australian Census and Migrants Integrated Dataset, 2016](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/C916B16440BF9B60CA257C7E000FC851?opendocument) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/C916B16440BF9B60CA257C7E000FC851?opendocument) (ACMID).

The ACMID 2016 relates to people who responded to the 9 August 2016 Census of Population and Housing and had a permanent visa record on the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs) Permanent Migrant Settlement Dataset with a date of arrival between 1 January 2000 and 9 August 2016. ACMID estimates were a result of integrating the data from these two data sources and calibrating the linked records to known population totals from Home Affairs dataset.

Estimates from CoRMS will also differ from estimates from the [Microdata: Australian Census and Temporary Entrants Integrated Dataset, 2016](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/3419.0.55.001Main%20Features12016?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=3419.0.55.001&issue=2016&num=&view=) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/3419.0.55.001Main%20Features12016?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=3419.0.55.001&issue=2016&num=&view=) (ACTEID). The ACTEID 2016 relates only to temporary entrants who were present in Australia on 9 August 2016 (Census Night) and integrates their Census data with temporary visa holder data from Home Affairs.

Comparability with non-ABS sources

The Department of Home Affairs is the main holder of stocks and flow data on migrants by visa (e.g. Migration Program). Due to differences in collection objectives and definitions, data from CoRMS are not comparable with Home Affairs data. For more information on the Migration Program and Home Affairs statistics, refer to their [website](http://www.border.gov.au/) (http://www.border.gov.au/).

How the data is released

Datacubes/spreadsheets

A number of data cubes (spreadsheets) containing all tables produced for this publication are available from the Data downloads section of the publication. The data cubes present tables of estimates and proportions, and their corresponding measures of error.

The ABS no longer formally utilises a standard classification for Main English Speaking Country (MESC). Therefore, from 2019 onward, the data item 'Country of birth (MESC)' will not be available as part of this publication and has not been included in the tables available for download. As a result, Tables 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16 and 18 have been modified accordingly and two tables (Table 18 and 19 in the previous iteration in 2016) have been removed.

TableBuilder

For users who wish to undertake more detailed analysis of the data, the survey microdata will be released through the TableBuilder product (see [Microdata: Characteristics of Recent Migrants, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6250.0.25.002Main+Features1November%202016?OpenDocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/6250.0.25.002Main+Features1November%202016?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 6250.0.25.002) for more detail). Microdata can be used by approved users to produce customised tables and analysis from the survey data. Microdata products are designed to ensure the integrity of the data whilst maintaining the confidentiality of the respondents to the survey. More information can be found at [How to Apply for Microdata \(https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/How+to+Apply+for+Microdata\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/home/How+to+Apply+for+Microdata).

Custom tables

Customised statistical tables to meet individual requirements can be produced on request. These are subject to confidentiality and sampling variability constraints which may limit what can be provided. Enquiries on the information available and the cost of these services should be made to the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

Technical note - data quality

Reliability of estimates

Two types of error are possible in estimates based on a sample survey:

- non-sampling error
- sampling error

Non-sampling error

Non-sampling error is caused by factors other than those related to sample selection. It is any factor that results in the data values not accurately reflecting the true value of the population.

It can occur at any stage throughout the survey process. Examples include:

- selected people that do not respond (e.g. refusals, non-contact)
- questions being misunderstood
- responses being incorrectly recorded
- errors in coding or processing the survey data

Sampling error

Sampling error is the expected difference that can occur between the published estimates and the value that would have been produced if the whole population had been surveyed. Sampling error is the result of random variation and can be estimated using measures of variance in the data.

Standard error

One measure of sampling error is the standard error (SE). There are about two chances in three that an estimate will differ by less than one SE from the figure that would have been obtained if the whole population had been included. There are about 19 chances in 20 that an estimate will differ by less than two SEs.

Relative standard error

The relative standard error (RSE) is a useful measure of sampling error. It is the SE expressed as a percentage of the estimate:

$$RSE\% = \left(\frac{SE}{estimate} \right) \times 100$$

The smaller the estimate, the higher the RSE. Very small estimates are subject to high SEs (relative to the size of the estimate) which reduces their value for most uses. Only estimates with RSEs less than 25% are considered reliable for most purposes.

Estimates with larger RSEs, between 25% and less than 50% have been included in the publication, but are flagged to indicate they are subject to high SEs. These should be used with caution. Estimates with RSEs of 50% or more have also been flagged and are considered unreliable for most purposes. RSEs for these estimates are not published.

Margin of error for proportions

Another useful measure is the margin of error (MOE), which shows the largest possible difference (due to sampling error) that could exist between the estimate and what would have been produced had all people been included in the survey, at a given level of confidence. It is useful for understanding and comparing the accuracy of proportion estimates. Confidence levels can vary (e.g. typically 90%, 95% or 99%), but in this publication, all MOEs are provided for estimates at the 95% confidence level. At this level, there are 19 chances in 20 that the estimate will differ from the population value by less than the provided MOE. The 95% MOE is obtained by multiplying the SE by 1.96.

$$MOE = SE \times 1.96$$

Depending on how the estimate is to be used, an MOE of greater than 10% may be considered too large to inform decisions. For example, a proportion of 15% with an MOE of plus or minus 11% would mean the estimate could be anything from 4% to 26%.

Confidence intervals

The estimate combined with the MOE defines a range, known as a confidence interval. This range is likely to include the true population value with a given level of confidence. A confidence interval is calculated by taking the estimate plus or minus the MOE of that estimate. It is important to consider this range when using the estimates to make assertions about the population or to inform decisions. Because MOEs in this publication are provided at the 95% confidence level, a 95% confidence interval can be calculated around the estimate, as follows:

$$95\% \text{ Confidence Interval} = (\text{estimate} - MOE, \text{estimate} + MOE)$$

Measures of error in this publication

This publication reports the relative standard error (RSE) for estimates of counts ('000) and the margin of error (MOE) for estimates of proportions (%).

Calculating measures of error

Proportions or percentages formed from the ratio of two count estimates are also subject to sampling error. The size of the error depends on the accuracy of both the numerator and the denominator. A formula to approximate the RSE of a proportion is given below. This formula is only valid when the numerator (x) is a subset of the denominator (y):

$$RSE\left(\frac{x}{y}\right) \approx \sqrt{[RSE(x)]^2 - [RSE(y)]^2}$$

When calculating measures of error, it may be useful to convert RSE or MOE to SE. This allows the use of standard formulas involving the SE. The SE can be obtained from RSE or MOE using the following formulas:

$$SE = \frac{RSE\% \times \text{estimate}}{100}$$

$$SE = \frac{MOE}{1.96}$$

The RSE can also be used to directly calculate a MOE with a 95% confidence level:

$$MOE = \frac{RSE\% \times \text{estimate} \times 1.96}{100}$$

Calculating differences

The difference between two survey estimates (counts or percentages) can also be calculated from published estimates. Such an estimate is also subject to sampling error. The sampling error of the difference between two estimates depends on their SEs and the relationship (correlation) between them. An approximate SE of the difference between two estimates (x - y) may be calculated by the following formula:

$$SE(x - y) \approx \sqrt{[SE(x)]^2 + [SE(y)]^2}$$

While this formula will only be exact for differences between separate and uncorrelated characteristics or sub populations, it provides a good approximation for the differences likely to be of interest in this publication.

Significance testing

When comparing estimates between surveys or between populations within a survey, it is useful to determine whether apparent differences are 'real' differences or simply the product of differences between the survey samples.

One way to examine this is to determine whether the difference between the estimates is statistically significant. This is done by calculating the standard error of the difference between two estimates (x and y) and using that to calculate the test statistic using the formula below:

$$\frac{|x-y|}{SE(x-y)}$$

where

$$SE(y) \approx \frac{RSE(y) \times y}{100}$$

If the value of the statistic is greater than 1.96, we can say there is good evidence of a statistically significant difference at 95% confidence levels between the two populations with respect to that characteristic. Otherwise, it cannot be stated with confidence that there is a real difference between the populations.

Glossary

Show all

Australian citizen

Being an Australian citizen formalises a person's membership of the Australian community. It entitles a person to live permanently in Australia, hold an Australian passport and do such things as vote to elect Australia's governments, stand for parliament, work in the Public Service and serve in the armed forces. A person may acquire Australian citizenship in a number of ways, for example, by birth, adoption, descent, resumption or granting of Australian citizenship (naturalisation). Migrants no longer require a visa once citizenship is granted.

Bachelor degree or higher

Includes Bachelor Degree, Graduate Diploma, Graduate Certificate and Postgraduate Degree (Masters Degree, Doctorate).

Balance of state/territory

Comprises the balance of each state/territory not included in Capital City. See [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\): Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2016](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.001) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.001) (cat. no. 1270.0.55.001).

Capital city

Refers to Greater Capital City Statistical Areas (GCCSA) as defined by the ASGS. The GCCSAs represent the socio-economic extent of each of the eight State and Territory capital cities. The whole of the ACT is included in the GCCSA. See [Australian Statistical Geography Standard \(ASGS\): Volume 1 - Main Structure and Greater Capital City Statistical Areas, July 2016](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.001) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1270.0.55.001) (cat. no. 1270.0.55.001).

Certificate

Includes Certificate I/II/III/IV and Certificate not further defined.

Country of birth

Country of birth has been classified according to the [Standard Australian Classification of Countries \(SACC\), Second Edition](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/C07748560EAB6540CA2578F10014B87E?opendocument) (https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/allprimarymainfeatures/C07748560EAB6540CA2578F10014B87E?opendocument) (cat. no. 1269.0). 'Born in Australia' refers to all persons born in Australia or any of its external territories. 'Born overseas' refers to all persons not 'born in Australia', including those born at sea and persons whose country of birth is unknown.

Education

Education data are classified according to the [Australian Standard Classification of Education \(ASCED\), 2001](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0) (https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1272.0) (cat. no. 1272.0). The ASCED is a national standard classification which can be applied to all sectors of the Australian education system including schools, vocational education and training, and higher education. The ASCED comprises two classifications: Level of Education and Field of Education.

Employed

Persons who, during the reference week:

- worked for one hour or more for pay, profit, commission or payment in kind in a job or business, or on a farm (employees and owner managers of incorporated or unincorporated enterprises)
- worked for one hour or more without pay in a family business or on a farm (contributing family workers)
- were employees who had a job but were not at work and were:

- away from work for less than four weeks up to the end of the reference week; or
 - away from work for more than four weeks up to the end of the reference week and received pay for some or all of the four week period to the end of the reference week; or
 - away from work as a standard work or shift arrangement ; or
 - on strike or locked out; or
 - on workers' compensation and expected to return to their job.
- were owner managers who had a job, business or farm, but were not at work.

Employed full-time

Employed persons who usually worked 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and those who, although usually working less than 35 hours a week, worked 35 hours or more during the reference week.

Employed part-time

Employed persons who usually worked less than 35 hours or more a week (in all jobs) and either did so during the reference week, or were not at work in the reference week.

Estimated resident population (ERP)

Estimated resident population (ERP), is Australia's official measure of the population of Australia and is based on the concept of usual residence. It refers to all people, regardless of nationality, citizenship or legal status, who usually live in Australia, with the exception of foreign diplomatic personnel and their families. It includes usual residents who are overseas for fewer than 12 months. It excludes overseas visitors who are in Australia for fewer than 12 months. Refer to [Australian Demographic Statistics \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3101.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3101.0) (cat. no. 3101.0).

Had a job since arrival

Includes persons who were employed as at survey month or who had a job at some time since their arrival.

Household income

Source of household income is from all members of the household, including persons who are not a 'recent migrant' or a 'temporary resident'.

Industry

Industry data is classified according to the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial](#)

[Classification \(ANZSIC\), 2006 \(Revision 2.0\) \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/1292.0) (cat. no. 1292.0).

Labour force

Persons who were in the categories 'employed' or 'unemployed' as defined.

Labour force participation rate

For any group, the labour force expressed as a percentage of all persons aged 15 years and over in the same group.

Level not determined

Level not determined includes inadequately described responses or where no responses were given.

Level of highest non-school qualification

Level of highest non-school qualification identifies the highest educational qualification a person has attained in any area of study. It is not a measurement of the relative importance of different fields of study, but a ranking of qualifications and other educational attainments regardless of the particular area of study or the type of institution in which the study was undertaken.

It is categorised according to the [Australian Standard Classification of Education \(ASCED\), 2001 \(https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1272.0Main+Features12001?OpenDocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1272.0Main+Features12001?OpenDocument) (cat. no. 1272.0) Level of Education classification.

Main applicant

The 'main applicant' is the person whose skills or proposed activities in Australia determine whether a visa application is granted. The visa is granted to the main applicant, and any secondary applicant(s) (i.e. spouse or dependents).

When a family unit migrates to Australia as part of the same migration event, they are all listed on the same visa application. The type of visa held by all the family members is therefore the same as that held by the main applicant. For example, if the mother obtained a Skilled visa and was sponsored by an employer then all other family members on that visa application would be classified as holding a Skilled visa and being sponsored by an employer. This also covers instances where the respondent was listed on the visa with other people but did not arrive in Australia at the same time as them (e.g. stayed back in their home country to settle affairs while the others moved out here and then rejoined them here a few months later).

Main field of non-school qualification

Main field of non-school qualification is defined as the subject matter of the educational qualification. It is categorised according to the [Australian Standard Classification of Education \(ASCED\), 2001](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1272.0Main+Features12001?OpenDocument) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1272.0Main+Features12001?OpenDocument>) (cat. no. 1272.0) Field of Education classification.

Non-school qualification

Non-school qualifications are awarded for educational attainments other than those of pre-primary, primary or secondary education. They include qualifications at the Postgraduate Degree level, Master Degree level, Graduate Diploma and Graduate Certificate level, Bachelor Degree level, Advanced Diploma and Diploma level, and Certificates I, II, III and IV levels. Non-school qualifications may be obtained concurrently with school qualifications.

Not in the labour force

Persons who were not in the categories 'employed' or 'unemployed' as defined.

Occupation

Occupation data is classified according to the [Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations \(ANZSCO\), 2013, Version 1.2](https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1220.0Main+Features12013,%20Version%201.2?OpenDocument) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/1220.0Main+Features12013,%20Version%201.2?OpenDocument>) (cat. no. 1220.0).

Permanent visa/resident

The permission or authority granted by Australia for foreign nationals to live in Australia permanently. Permanent visa holders are referred to as 'Permanent residents'.

Recent migrant

A recent migrant is a person who;

- was born overseas,
- who first arrived to live in Australia (for one year or more) after 2009,
- was aged 15 years or over on arrival,
- was not an Australian citizen or New Zealand citizen on arrival,
- does not currently hold New Zealand citizenship, and
- has permanent Australian resident status (has become an Australian citizen since arrival or holds a permanent visa).

Reference week

The week preceding the week in which the interview was conducted.

Secondary applicant

A person whose visa was granted on the basis of being the family member (e.g. spouse, dependent child) of a person who qualified for a visa. They will have been identified on the visa application as a secondary or an 'other' applicant with the person who met the visa criteria being specifically identified on the visa application as the 'main applicant'.

Temporary resident

A temporary resident is defined in CoRMS as a person who:

- was born overseas,
- who first arrived to live in Australia (for one year or more) after 2009,
- was aged 15 years or over on arrival,
- was not an Australian citizen or New Zealand citizen on arrival,
- does not currently hold New Zealand citizenship, and
- holds a temporary visa (e.g. a student or working holiday visa).

Temporary visa

The permission or authority granted by Australia for a foreign national to travel to Australia and stay up to a specified period of time. Temporary entrants for this survey include:

- tourists
- students
- business people
- people with specialist skills, such as managers, academics and medical practitioners
- people who make a social or cultural contribution to the community, such as entertainers, media and film staff, sports people, religious workers, visiting academics and public lecturers
- people who contribute to the development of international relations, such as participants in exchange programs and working holiday makers.

Type of visa as at November 2019 (current visa)

The visa the respondent held at the time of interview, that allowed them to stay in Australia. Categories for type of visa as at November 2019 are:

- Australian citizen - Persons who arrived to live in Australia on a permanent or temporary visa and have since obtained Australian citizenship
- Permanent Skilled - Skilled migrants are selected on the basis of their age, skills and their ability to quickly make a contribution to the Australian economy. Includes Independent, Family or government sponsored, and Employer sponsored visas

- Permanent Family - Includes Partner, Child and Parent visas
- Permanent Humanitarian - Includes Special Humanitarian Program and Refugee visas
- Permanent Other/n.f.d. - Includes all other permanent visa categories or where the type of permanent visa could not be determined
- Temporary Student - Temporary student visas are granted to people studying or seeking to study, training or skills development in Australia, and are planning to stay in Australia for 12 months or more
- Temporary Other/n.f.d. - Includes tourists, working holiday makers and visitors planning to stay in Australia for 12 months or more, or where the type of temporary visa could not be determined.

A respondent's visa type as at November 2019 may be different from the type of visa held on arrival to live in Australia. This may be the result of a respondent obtaining Australian citizenship, or the respondent's successful onshore application to another visa type after arrival.

Type of visa on arrival to live in Australia (initial visa)

The visa the respondent held when they first arrived in Australia to live that allowed them to come to Australia. Categories for type of visa on arrival to live in Australia are as for 'Type of visa as at November 2019'.

A respondent's type of visa on arrival to live in Australia may differ from the type of visa held as at November 2019. This may be the result of a respondent obtaining Australian citizenship, or the respondent's successful onshore application to another visa type after arrival.

Unemployed

Persons who were not employed during the reference week, and:

- had actively looked for full-time or part-time work at any time in the four weeks up to the end of the reference week and were available for work in the reference week or
- were waiting to start a new job within four weeks from the end of the reference week and could have started in the reference week if the job had been available then.

Unemployment rate

For any group, the number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the labour force in the same group.

Quality declaration - summary

Institutional environment

For information on the institutional environment of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), including the legislative obligations of the ABS, financing and governance arrangements, and mechanisms for scrutiny of ABS operations, please see [ABS Institutional Environment \(https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/4a256353001af3ed4b2562bb00121564/10ca14cb967e5b83ca2573ae00197b65!OpenDocument\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/4a256353001af3ed4b2562bb00121564/10ca14cb967e5b83ca2573ae00197b65!OpenDocument).

Relevance

The Characteristics of Recent Migrants Survey (CoRMS) provides a range of information on recent migrants and temporary residents (people who migrated to Australia as adults after 2009). The specific populations referenced in CoRMS are defined in the Explanatory Notes of this publication.

CoRMS provides data about the labour force status and other characteristics of recent migrants and temporary residents, including:

- general demographic and employment characteristics of recent migrants and temporary residents,
- the type of visa held by recent migrants and temporary residents on arrival in Australia,
- education and employment before and after arriving in Australia,
- any difficulties experienced finding work since migration and
- proficiency in English.

As CoRMS is collected as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey (LFS), persons excluded from the LFS were also excluded from this survey (see Explanatory Notes of [Labour Force, Australia \(https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0) (cat. no. 6202.0) for standard LFS exclusions). Additional exclusions from this survey were people living in Indigenous communities and people in non-private dwellings such as hotels, university residences, boarding schools, hospitals, retirements homes, homes for people with disabilities and prisons.

Information from CoRMS will be used by a wide range of public and private sector agencies, in particular the Department of Home Affairs.

Timeliness

The Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Migrants Survey was first conducted in 1984 and triennially thereafter up to 1999. It was collected again in 2004, 2007, 2010, 2013,

2016, and 2019. The name of the survey was changed in 2007 to Labour Force Status and Other Characteristics of Recent Migrants Survey, and again in 2010, to Characteristics of Recent Migrants Survey to better reflect the scope of the survey. Data from the survey are released approximately six months after the completion of enumeration.

Note that the 2019 CoRMS was enumerated before the COVID-19 pandemic where migration and labour force activity in Australia were affected.

Accuracy

CoRMS is designed to provide reliable estimates at the national level and for each state and territory. The CoRMS sample includes 41,673 people who completed the monthly population survey, of whom 2,887 recent migrants and temporary residents also completed CoRMS. The Technical Note explains the measurement of error in CoRMS data.

Two types of error are possible in an estimate based on a sample survey: non-sampling error and sampling error.

Non-sampling error arises from inaccuracies in collecting, recording and processing the data. Every effort is made to minimise reporting error by the careful design of questionnaires, intensive training and supervision of interviewers, and efficient data processing procedures.

Sampling error occurs because a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed. Sampling error can be estimated by measuring variability within a sample. In this publication sample error is reported using relative standard error and margin of error at the 95% confidence interval. For more information about error in CoRMS data see the Technical Note on data quality.

Coherence

The ABS seeks to maximise consistency and comparability over time by minimising changes to its surveys. However, sound survey practice requires ongoing development and maintenance to maintain the integrity of the data and the efficiency of collection.

The Explanatory Notes include advice for comparing estimates from CoRMS 2019 with previous iterations of the survey, including a list of changes that have been made to the survey and the data processing methods.

For a full list of changes made to the LFS, see the 'Labour force comparability over time' chapter of [Labour Statistics: Concepts, Sources and Methods, Feb 2018](#)

(<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6102.0.55.001>) (cat. no. 6102.0.55.001) and [Information Paper: Forthcoming Changes to Labour Force Statistics, Aug 2015](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6292.0>) (cat. no. 6292.0).

Data were compared to non-ABS sources of information that were available. Comparisons conducted by the ABS showed that the data from this survey are not directly comparable with other available sources due to differences in definitions, scope and collection methods.

Interpretability

Detailed information on the terminology, classifications and other technical aspects associated with CoRMS can be found in the relevant web pages included with this release.

Accessibility

Tabulated data and associated measures of error are available in spreadsheet format and can be accessed from the Data downloads section.

Data from this survey will also be accessible in the TableBuilder environment, enabling users to create their own customised output as required. For further details, refer to the [Microdata Entry Page](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/microdata+entry+page) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/d3310114.nsf/home/microdata+entry+page>) on the ABS website.

Data are also available on request. Note that detailed data can be subject to high RSEs which in some cases may result in data being confidentialised.

For further information about these or related statistics, contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

The [ABS Privacy Policy](https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/Privacy?opendocument#from-banner=GB) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/websitedbs/D3310114.nsf/Home/Privacy?opendocument#from-banner=GB>) outlines how the ABS will handle any personal information that you provide to us.

Abbreviations

[Show all](#)

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ACMID	Australian Census and Migrants Integrated Dataset
ACTEID	Australian Census and Temporary Entrants Integrated Dataset
ANZSCO	Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations
ANZSIC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
ASCED	Australian Standard Classification of Education
ASGS	Australian Statistical Geography Standard
CoRMS	Characteristics of Recent Migrants Survey
GCCSA	Greater Capital City Statistical Areas
ERP	Estimated Resident Population
LFS	Labour Force Survey
MOE	margin of error
MPS	Monthly Population Survey
n.f.d.	not further defined
RSE	relative standard error
SA1	Statistical area level 1
SA2	Statistical area level 2
SA4	Statistical area level 4
SACC	Standard Australian Classification of Countries
SE	standard error
SEIFA	Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas